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Question Time: Getting money out of politics

Are corporations people? Should elections be publicly funded?

**By Rob Burgess
Tribune night editor**

In 1976, the Supreme Court of the United States decided Buckley v. Valeo, a landmark case in which the justices equated money and speech for the first time.

Then, in the 2010 case, Citizens United v. FEC, the court down the limit on the total amount of cash donors can contribute to candidates and political action committees.

In addition to these two rulings, the Burwell v. Hobby Lobby decision in 2014 has created a new reality where corporations are now not only considered people, but now can hold religious views as well.

Several groups have risen up against this idea, not the least of which is Wolf PAC, which has been agitating for a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlawing corporate personhood and founding publicly-funded elections. So far four of the required 34 states needed to amend the constitution have signed on. (Those would be California, Illinois, New Jersey and Vermont.)

So, we wanted to know: "Do you think there should be a constitutional amendment to end corporate personhood and institute publicly-funded elections? Why or why not?"

Your answers

"Yes. That would stop politics from being a profession." — **Bonnie Jean**

"Politicians have forgotten that their job is [to] represent their constituents. They now represent whatever corporation that has them in their pocket. So if this would make them return to representing the people then I am all for it." — **Peggy Phillips**

"That decision from SCOTUS was an affront to all people. Corporations are NOT people and should not have rights." — **Peggy Brava**

Our answers

"I haven't put much thought into the idea of ending corporate personhood. But while instituting publicly-funded elections seems like it could be a good idea — I'm as tired as anyone of the way moneyed interests seem to run elections — I'm not sure it wouldn't introduce more problems than it solves. I'm uncomfortable with the idea that either incumbent officeholders or unelected government

administrators would have control over disbursement of campaign funds.” — **Sarah Einselen**

“it is a very tough question. I think I disagree because it could place a corporate influence on elections. I think it is only fair for those who choose to run for a political position to do it themselves, to keep the game fair and equal.” — **Briee Eikenberry**

“Absolutely. We have no chance of a functioning democracy without something like this. Corporations are not people. Money is not speech. These are such simple concepts it seems foolish to have to even point them out, but here we are. If those things are true, why don’t corporations just run for office and cut out the middleman? What do we need politicians for anyway at that point?” — **Rob Burgess**

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